16.

THE LIFE of FAITH:

Recommended in a

LETTER

Found in the

Study of a late Reverend DIVINE:

BEING AN

ANSWER to this QUESTION,

How to live in this WORLD, ſo as to live in HEAVEN?

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THE

LIFE of FAITH, &c.

DEAR BROTHER,

YOURS I received, and thought on that queſtion, being, "How to live in "this world, ſo as to live in heaven? It is one of the common pleas of my heart, which I have often occaſion to ſtudy, and therefore takes me not unprovided. It is hard to keep the helm up againſt ſo many croſs-winds as we meet withal upon this ſea of fire and glaſs.

That man knoweth not his own heart, that finds it not difficult to break through the entanglements of the world. Creature-ſmiles ſtop and entice away the affections from Jeſus Chriſt; creature-frowns encompaſs

compaſs and tempeſtuate the ſpirit, that it thinks it doth well to be angry. Both ways, grace is a loſer. We had all need to watch and pray, leſt we enter into temptation.

The greateſt of your conflicts, and cauſes of complaints, ſeem to have their original here: Temptations follow-tempers. As there are two predominant qualities in the temper of every body; ſo there are two predominant ſins in the temper of every heart. Pride is one in all men in the world. I will tell you familiarly, what God hath done for my ſoul, and in what trade my ſoul keeps towards himſelf.

I am come to a concluſion, to look after no great matters in the world, but to know Chriſt and him crucified. I make beſt way in a low gale. A high ſpirit, and a high ſail together, will be dangerous; and therefore I prepare to live low. I deſire not much. I pray againſt it. My ſtudy is my calling: ſo much as to tend that without diſtraction, I am bound to plead for, and more I deſire not. By my ſecluded retirements, I have advantage to obſerve how every day's occaſions inſenſibly wear off the heart from God, and bury it in ſelf; which they who live in care and lumber, cannot be ſenſible of. I have

ſeemed

ſeemed to ſee a need of every thing God gives me, and to want nothing that he denies me. There is no diſpenſation, tho' afflictive, but, either in it or after it, I find I could not be without it, whether it be taken from me, or not given to me; ſooner or later, God quiets me in himſelf without it. I caſt all my concerns on the Lord, and live ſecurely on the care and wiſdom of my heavenly Father. My ways, you know, are, in ſome ſenſe, hedged up with thorns, and grow darker and darker daily; but yet I diſtruſt not my good God in the leaſt, and live more quietly in the abſence of all, by faith, than I ſhould do, I am perſuaded, if I poſſeſſed them. I think the Lord deals kindly with me, to make me believe for all my mercies before I have them; they will then be Iſaac's ſons of laughter. The leſs reaſon hath to work upon, the more freely faith caſts itſelf on the faithfulneſs of God. I find that whilſt faith is ſteady, nothing can diſquiet me; and when faith totters, nothing can eſtabliſh me. If I tumble out amongſt means and creatures, I am preſently loſt, and can come to no end; but if I ſtay myſelf on God, and leave him to work in his own way and time, I am at reſt, and can ſit down and ſleep in a promiſe, when a thouſand riſe up againſt

againſt me: therefore my way is not to caſt before hand, but to work with God by the day. "Sufficient to the day, is the evil thereof." I find ſo much to do continually with my calling and my heart, that I have no time to puzzle myſelf with peradventures and futurities. As for the ſtate of the times, it is very gloomy and tempeſttuous. But why do the Heathen rage? Faith lies at anchor in the midſt of the waves, and believes the accompliſhment of the promiſe through all thoſe overturnings, confuſions, and ſeeming impoſſibilities.

Upon this God do I live, who is our God for ever, and will guide us to the death. Methinks I lie becalmed in his boſom as Luther, in ſuch a caſe. I am not much concerned, let Chriſt ſee to it. I know prophecies are now dark, and the books are ſealed, and men have all been deceived, and every ciſtern fails, yet God doth continue faithful; and faithful is he that hath promiſed, who will do it. I believe theſe dark times are the womb of a bright morning.

Many things more I might have ſaid; but enough. Oh! brother, keep cloſe to God, and then you need fear nothing. Maintain ſecret and intimate communion

with

with God, and then a little of the creature will go a great way. Take time for duties in private; croud not religion into a corner of the day. There is a Dutch proverb: "Nothing is got by thieving, nor loſt by "praying." Lay up all your good in God, ſo as to over ballance the ſweetneſs and bitterneſs of all creatures. Spend no time anxiouſly in forehand contrivances for this world; they never ſucceed; God will run his diſpenſations another way. Self-contrivances are the effects of unbelief. I can ſpeak by experience. Would men ſpend thoſe hours they run out in plots and devices, in communion with God, and leave all on him by ventureſome believing, they would have more peace and comfort.

I leave you with your God and mine. The Lord Jeſus be with your ſpirit. Pray for your own ſoul; pray for Jeruſalem; and pray hard for your poor brother.

A

HYMN.

I.

IN all my troubles, ſharp and ſtrong,
My ſoul to Jeſus flies;
My anchor-hold is firm in him
When ſwelling billows riſe.

II.

His comforts bear my ſpirits up;
I truſt a faithful God:
The ſure foundation of my hope
Is in a Saviour's blood.

III.

Loud Hallelujahs ſing, my ſoul,
To thy Redeemer's name:
In joy and ſorrow, life and death,
His love is ſtill the ſame.

FINIS.